

**Traumatic Brain & Spinal Cord Injury (TBSCI) Trust Fund Advisory Board  
MEETING MINUTES**

**August 13, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.**

**Office of Aging and Adult Services**

**I. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Dr. Andrew Kuyoro called the meeting to order at approximately 10:02 a.m.

**II. ATTENDANCE**

**Board Members Present**

Dr. Andrew Kuyoro; Gary Matherne; Dr. John Fanning; Dr. Bern G. Lee; Melissa Bayham; Roxane E. Bingham; Dr. Elizabeth N. Morgan; Yvette D. Pacaccio; Gearry T. Williams

**Board Members Not Present**

Senator William “Bill” Wheat, Jr.; Dr. Jason Cormier; Representative Lawrence Bagley; Dr. Beverly Gladney

**Agency Staff Present**

Tonia Gedward, Ayanna Wilson, Valencia Roberts

**Other Attendees Present**

Charlie Picou

**III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Board approved the minutes as is from the meeting held on May 14, 2026. Dr. John Fanning made a motion to approve the minutes as stated; Gary Matherne seconded the motion. **Motion Passed.**

**IV. ORDER OF BUSINESS**

**a. TBSCI Financial Report**

The TBSCI Trust Fund Program Manager, Tonia Gedward, presented the program’s financial report, including the budget and expenditures. She began by informing the Board that several board members’ terms have expired; however, she is still awaiting the Governor’s approval of the paperwork. Until then, these members may continue to serve.

While reviewing the financial report, Tonia stated that the program finished fiscal year 2026 with approximately \$66,000. She noted that Kimberly mentioned at the last meeting that the NASHIA membership was not reflected on the report. It is included under ‘services, dues, and others’ and totals \$400 per year, which covers her as the Program Director. She added, for clarification, that when reviewing the left side of the report, the first category—‘Personnel Services’—includes staffing and all related benefits. The second category—‘Operating

Services’—covers items such as mail, supplies, travel, and similar expenses. The final category—‘Client Services’—represents funds spent directly on participants, which total approximately \$1.7 million out of the \$2 million budget. Tonia then asked if there were any further questions. Geary Williams moved to adopt the financial report. Dr. Bern Lee seconded the motion. **Motion passed.**

**b. TBSCI Program Status**

Tonia stated that she emailed everyone a copy of the Board Operating Procedures for Advisory Board Review Requests. She explained that the Board had never had formal procedures before, but now, with the help of Charlie Picou (LDH’s legal team member), they have established guidelines. She thanked Mr. Picou for ensuring the Board’s processes align with Louisiana laws. She noted that the Board will follow these procedures moving forward when reviewing Advisory Board Requests. She added that we will discuss the procedures during the next meeting, and if anyone sees changes that need to be made or has questions, she and Charlie will be happy to assist.

**a. Program Summary**

Tonia stated that she had been asked to create visual charts and graphs, which she prepared. She noted that these visuals would help everyone follow along as she discussed what the program has accomplished over the past couple of months. She added that she tried to include a six-month look-back and now has this information set up to generate automatically, so she will be able to provide it in future meetings.

Tonia stated that as of August 8, 2026, there were 226 applicants on the waitlist. These applications date back to 2023. She discussed the number of applications processed within the last six months, reviewing the monthly totals from February through July. She explained that approximately 75% of the applications received each month were approved. The total number of applications received during the six-month period was 45. She noted that while this may not seem like a large number, she is comfortable with it because a higher volume of applications would lead to a faster increase in the waitlist. The average monthly increase over the six-month period was approximately 3.4%.

She then reviewed the number of participants served during the reporting period. As of today, the program has 579 eligible participants, including 376 individuals with traumatic spinal cord injuries and 203 with traumatic brain injuries. During the reporting period, 216 requests for goods and services were submitted, resulting in 190 Purchase Authorizations. A total of 589 payment requests were received, with 557 vendor payments and participant reimbursements processed. She also

reported on additional daily program tasks, including annual assessments and caseload changes.

The program mailed 243 letters to participants who had not requested goods or services within the past two years. The letter explains which goods and services may be covered, provides the participant's support coordination agency information, and encourages them to contact their agency to update their contact information or to request goods and services.

**c. BIALA Update**

Tonia gave the following updates for BIALA in Kim's absence: the resource center remains active, with the helpline receiving an average of 29 calls per month, the website averaging 2,188 monthly page views, and outreach activities averaging 26 per month.

This year, BIALA successfully championed two major bills—SB 295 and HB 1244—both of which have now been signed into law. SB 295 ensures commercial insurance coverage for post-acute cognitive rehabilitation beginning January 2027. HB 1244, 'Riley's Law,' establishes a voluntary brain injury designation on Louisiana driver's licenses and ID cards, with implementation planned for January 2028.

BIALA also hosted its first overnight weekend camp, serving 45 individuals and caregivers at no cost, and held two summer community events reaching 60 participants. Virtual support offerings continue to grow, especially for those in rural areas.

In June, BIALA represented Louisiana at United Spinal Association's Roll on Capitol Hill, attending seven congressional meetings and advocating for improved access to essential services and equipment. Additional advocacy continued at the Governor's Office of Disability Affairs Conference.

Save the date: BIALA's 18th annual conference will be held March 19–20, 2027, in Kenner. Presenters are welcome to reach out.

Kim thanks the Board for their ongoing support, which enables BIALA to continue providing resources, connection, and hope for individuals across Louisiana living with brain and spinal cord injuries.

**V. PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no public comment.

**VI. Introduction of Advisory Board Review**

**VII. Motion to Enter into a Closed Session**

**VIII. Closed Session**

- a. Overview of the request
- b. Participant Presentation
- c. Board Member Follow-up questions
- d. Board Deliberation

**IX. Motion to Enter into an Open Session**

Vote and Motion and Advisory Board Review Decision

**X. Adjournment**

There were no further questions or business to discuss; therefore, Dr. Andrew Kuyoro adjourned the meeting at 12:34 p.m. The next Board meeting is scheduled for November 12, 2026.

**2026 MEETING SCHEDULE**

February 12, 2026

May 14, 2026

August 13, 2026

November 12, 2026